



BioMap and Living Waters

Guiding Land Conservation for Biodiversity in Massachusetts

Core Habitats of Stockbridge

This report and associated map provide information about important sites for biodiversity conservation in your area.

This information is intended for conservation planning, and is not intended for use in state regulations.

Produced by:
Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program
Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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* Depending on the location of Core Habitats, your city or town may not have all of these sections.

Spring Salamander
(*Gyrinophilus porphyriticus*)
Species of Special Concern



Funding for this project was made available by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, contributions to the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Fund, and through the State Wildlife Grants Program of the US Fish & Wildlife Service.



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Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
North Drive, Westborough, MA 01581
Tel: (508) 792-7270, Ext. 200 Fax: (508) 792-7821
<http://www.nhesp.org>

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Introduction

In this report, the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program provides you with site-specific biodiversity information for your area. Protecting our biodiversity today will help ensure the full variety of species and natural communities that comprise our native flora and fauna will persist for generations to come.

The information in this report is the result of two statewide biodiversity conservation planning projects, **BioMap** and **Living Waters**. The goal of the BioMap project, completed in 2001, was to identify and delineate the most important areas for the long-term viability of terrestrial, wetland, and estuarine elements of biodiversity in Massachusetts. The goal of the Living Waters project, completed in 2003, was to identify and delineate the rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds that are important for freshwater biodiversity in the Commonwealth. These two conservation plans are based on documented observations of rare species, natural communities, and exemplary habitats.

What is a Core Habitat?

Both BioMap and Living Waters delineate **Core Habitats** that identify the most critical sites for biodiversity conservation across the state. Core Habitats represent habitat for the state's most viable rare plant and animal populations and include exemplary natural communities and aquatic habitats. Core Habitats represent a wide diversity of rare species and natural communities (see Table 1), and these areas are also thought to contain virtually all of the other described species in Massachusetts. Statewide, BioMap Core Habitats encompass 1,380,000 acres of uplands and wetlands, and Living Waters identifies 429 Core Habitats in rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds.



Core Habitats and Land Conservation

One of the most effective ways to protect biodiversity for future generations is to protect Core Habitats from adverse human impacts through land conservation. For Living Waters Core Habitats, protection efforts should focus on the **riparian areas**, the areas of land adjacent to water bodies. A naturally vegetated buffer that extends 330 feet (100 meters) from the water's edge helps to maintain cooler water temperature and to maintain the nutrients, energy, and natural flow of water needed by freshwater species.

In Support of Core Habitats

To further ensure the protection of Core Habitats and Massachusetts' biodiversity in the long-term, the BioMap and Living Waters projects identify two additional areas that help support Core Habitats.

In BioMap, areas shown as **Supporting Natural Landscape** provide buffers around the Core Habitats, connectivity between Core Habitats, sufficient space for ecosystems to function, and contiguous undeveloped habitat for common species. Supporting Natural Landscape was



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generated using a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) model, and its exact boundaries are less important than the general areas that it identifies. Supporting Natural Landscape represents potential land protection priorities once Core Habitat protection has been addressed.

In Living Waters, *Critical Supporting Watersheds* highlight the immediate portion of the watershed that sustains, or possibly degrades, each freshwater Core Habitat. These areas were also identified using a GIS model. Critical Supporting Watersheds represent developed and undeveloped lands, and can be quite large. Critical Supporting Watersheds can be helpful in land-use planning, and while they are not shown on these maps, they can be viewed in the Living Waters report or downloaded from www.mass.gov/mgis.

Understanding Core Habitat Species, Community, and Habitat Lists

What's in the List?

Included in this report is a list of the species, natural communities, and/or aquatic habitats for each Core Habitat in your city or town. The lists are organized by Core Habitat number.

For the larger Core Habitats that span more than one town, the species and community lists refer to the entire Core Habitat, not just the portion that falls within your city or town. For a list of all the state-listed rare species within your city or town's boundary, whether or not they are in Core Habitat, please see the town rare species lists available at www.nhesp.org.

The list of species and communities within a Core Habitat contains only the species and

Table 1. The number of rare species and types of natural communities explicitly included in the BioMap and Living Waters conservation plans, relative to the total number of native species statewide.

BioMap		
Biodiversity Group	Species and Verified Natural Community Types	
	Included in BioMap	Total Statewide
Vascular Plants	246	1,538
Birds	21	221 breeding species
Reptiles	11	25
Amphibians	6	21
Mammals	4	85
Moths and Butterflies	52	An estimated 2,500 to 3,000
Damselflies and Dragonflies	25	An estimated 165
Beetles	10	An estimated 2,500 to 4,000
Natural Communities	92	> 105 community types
Living Waters		
Biodiversity Group	Species	
	Included in Living Waters	Total Statewide
Aquatic Vascular Plants	23	114
Fishes	11	57
Mussels	7	12
Aquatic Invertebrates	23	An estimated > 2500

natural communities that were explicitly included in a given BioMap or Living Waters Core Habitat. Other rare species or examples of other natural communities may fall within the Core Habitat, but for various reasons are not included in the list. For instance, there are a few rare species that are omitted from the list or summary because of their particular sensitivity to the threat of collection. Likewise, the content of many very small Core Habitats are not described in this report or list, often because they contain a single location of a rare plant



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species. Some Core Habitats were created for suites of common species, such as forest birds, which are particularly threatened by habitat fragmentation. In these cases, the individual common species are not listed.

What does 'Status' mean?

The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife determines a status category for each rare species listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, M.G.L. c.131A, and its implementing regulations, 321 CMR 10.00. Rare species are categorized as Endangered, Threatened, or of Special Concern according to the following:

- **Endangered** species are in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their range or are in danger of extirpation from Massachusetts.
- **Threatened** species are likely to become Endangered in Massachusetts in the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of their range.
- **Special Concern** species have suffered a decline that could threaten the species if allowed to continue unchecked or occur in such small numbers or with such restricted distribution or specialized habitat requirements that they could easily become Threatened in Massachusetts.

In addition, the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program maintains an unofficial **watch list** of plants that are tracked due to potential conservation interest or concern, but are not regulated under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act or other laws or regulations. Likewise, described natural communities are not regulated any laws or regulations, but they can help to identify ecologically important areas that are worthy of protection. The status of natural

Legal Protection of Biodiversity

BioMap and Living Waters present a powerful vision of what Massachusetts would look like with full protection of the land that supports most of our biodiversity. To create this vision, some populations of state-listed rare species were deemed more likely to survive over the long-term than others.

Regardless of their potential viability, all sites of state-listed species have full legal protection under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (M.G.L. c.131A) and its implementing regulations (321 CMR 10.00). Habitat of state-listed wildlife is also protected under the Wetlands Protection Act Regulations (310 CMR 10.37 and 10.59). The **Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas** shows **Priority Habitats**, which are used for regulation under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act and Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (M.G.L. c.30) and **Estimated Habitats**, which are used for regulation of rare wildlife habitat under the Wetlands Protection Act. For more information on rare species regulations, see the *Massachusetts Natural Heritage Atlas*, available from the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program in book and CD formats.

BioMap and Living Waters are conservation planning tools and do not, in any way, supplant the Estimated and Priority Habitat Maps which have regulatory significance. Unless and until the combined BioMap and Living Waters vision is fully realized, we must continue to protect all populations of our state-listed species and their habitats through environmental regulation.

communities reflects the documented number and acreages of each community type in the state:

- **Critically Imperiled** communities typically have 5 or fewer documented sites or have very few remaining acres in the state.
- **Imperiled** communities typically have 6-20 sites or few remaining acres in the state.
- **Vulnerable** communities typically have 21-100 sites or limited acreage across the state.
- **Secure** communities typically have over 100 sites or abundant acreage across the state; however excellent examples are identified as Core Habitat to ensure continued protection.



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Understanding Core Habitat Summaries

Following the BioMap and Living Waters Core Habitat species and community lists, there is a descriptive summary of each Core Habitat that occurs in your city or town. This summary highlights some of the outstanding characteristics of each Core Habitat, and will help you learn more about your city or town's biodiversity. You can find out more information about many of these species and natural communities by looking at specific *fact sheets* at www.nhesp.org.

Next Steps

BioMap and Living Waters were created in part to help cities and towns prioritize their land protection efforts. While there are many reasons to conserve land – drinking water protection, recreation, agriculture, aesthetics, and others – BioMap and Living Waters Core Habitats are especially helpful to municipalities seeking to protect the rare species, natural communities, and overall biodiversity within their boundaries. Please use this report and map along with the rare species and community fact sheets to appreciate and understand the biological treasures in your city or town.

Protecting Larger Core Habitats

Core Habitats vary considerably in size. For example, the average BioMap Core Habitat is 800 acres, but Core Habitats can range from less than 10 acres to greater than 100,000 acres. These larger areas reflect the amount of land needed by some animal species for breeding, feeding, nesting, overwintering, and long-term survival. Protecting areas of this size can be

very challenging, and requires developing partnerships with neighboring towns.

Prioritizing the protection of certain areas within larger Core Habitats can be accomplished through further consultation with Natural Heritage Program biologists, and through additional field research to identify the most important areas of the Core Habitat.

Additional Information

If you have any questions about this report, or if you need help protecting land for biodiversity in your community, the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program staff looks forward to working with you.

Contact the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program:

by Phone 508-792-7270, Ext. 200

by Fax: 508-792-7821

by Email: natural.heritage@state.ma.us.

by Mail: North Drive
Westborough, MA 01581

The GIS datalayers of BioMap and Living Waters Core Habitats are available for download from MassGIS: www.mass.gov/mgis

Check out www.nhesp.org for information on:

- Rare species in your town
- Rare species fact sheets
- BioMap and Living Waters projects
- Natural Heritage publications, including:
 - * Field guides
 - * Natural Heritage Atlas, and more!



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BioMap: Species and Natural Communities

Stockbridge

Core Habitat BM766

Plants

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Small Site for Rare Plant

Core Habitat BM772

Plants

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Small Site for Rare Plant

Core Habitat BM774

Plants

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Small Site for Rare Plant

Core Habitat BM788

Plants

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Small Site for Rare Plant

Core Habitat BM793

Plants

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Small Site for Rare Plant

Core Habitat BM794

Plants

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Gattinger's Panic-Grass

Panicum gattingeri

Special Concern

Great Blue Lobelia

Lobelia siphilitica

Endangered



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BioMap: Species and Natural Communities

Stockbridge

Sensitive Rare Plant

Smooth Rock-Cress

Arabis laevigata

Threatened

Vertebrates

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Jefferson Salamander

Ambystoma jeffersonianum

Special Concern

Core Habitat BM797

Natural Communities

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Black Ash-Red Maple-Tamarack
Calcareous Seepage Swamp

Imperiled

Calcareous Basin Fen

Critically Imperiled

Plants

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Fen Cuckoo Flower

Cardamine pratensis var palustris

Threatened

Labrador Bedstraw

Galium labradoricum

Threatened

Pink Pyrola

Pyrola asarifolia var purpurea

Endangered

Sensitive Rare Plant

Small Bur-Reed

Sparganium natans

Endangered

Small Dropseed

Sporobolus neglectus

Endangered

Smooth Rock-Cress

Arabis laevigata

Threatened

Swamp Birch

Betula pumila

Endangered

Invertebrates

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Dion Skipper

Euphyes dion

Threatened

Vertebrates

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

American Bittern

Botaurus lentiginosus

Endangered



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BioMap: Species and Natural Communities

Stockbridge

Four-toed Salamander

Hemidactylium scutatum

Special Concern

Core Habitat BM798

Natural Communities

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Black Ash-Red Maple-Tamarack
Calcareous Seepage Swamp

Imperiled

Calcareous Basin Fen

Critically Imperiled

Plants

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Hemlock Parsley

Conioselinum chinense

Special Concern

Intermediate Spike-Sedge

Eleocharis intermedia

Threatened

Sensitive Rare Plant

Swamp Birch

Betula pumila

Endangered

White Adder's-Mouth

Malaxis monophyllos var brachypoda

Endangered

Vertebrates

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Spring Salamander

Gyrinophilus porphyriticus

Special Concern

Wood Turtle

Clemmys insculpta

Special Concern

Core Habitat BM809

Plants

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Small Site for Rare Plant

Core Habitat BM812

Natural Communities

Common Name

Scientific Name

Status

Forest Seep Community

Secure



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BioMap: Species and Natural Communities

Stockbridge

Plants

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Small Site for Rare Plant		

Core Habitat BM813

Natural Communities

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Circumneutral Talus Forest/Woodland		Vulnerable
Ridgetop Pitch Pine - Scrub Oak Community		Imperiled

Plants

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Arborvitae	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	Endangered
Climbing Fumitory	<i>Adlumia fungosa</i>	Threatened
Long-Styled Sanicle	<i>Sanicula odorata</i>	Threatened
Mountain Spleenwort	<i>Asplenium montanum</i>	Endangered
Purple Clematis	<i>Clematis occidentalis</i>	Special Concern
Sessile Water-Speedwell	<i>Veronica catenata</i>	Endangered

Vertebrates

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Sensitive Rare Vertebrate		

Core Habitat BM817

Plants

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Small Site for Rare Plant		



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BioMap: Core Habitat Summaries

Stockbridge

Core Habitat BM794

This Core Habitat straddles the towns of Stockbridge and West Stockbridge in the vicinity of Mohawk Lake and the upper reaches of Mohawk Brook. It contains a diversity of habitats that support Jefferson Salamanders, as well as wide array of rare plant species such as the beautiful Great Blue Lobelia.

Plants

A number of rare plant species inhabit different community types within this Core Habitat. The showy Great Blue Lobelia is found in lowland areas, while Smooth Rock-Cress inhabits upper slopes and ledges.

Vertebrates

This Core Habitat encompasses Mohawk Lake and the upper reaches of Mohawk Brook. It includes a number of vernal pools, forested and shrub wetlands, and adjacent upland forest that collectively provide habitat for Jefferson Salamanders.

Core Habitat BM797

Natural Communities

This Core Habitat contains an excellent complex of species-rich, nutrient-enriched wetlands. At 110 acres, the Black Ash-Red Maple-Tamarack Calcareous Seepage Swamp here is the largest known in the state. This mixed deciduous-coniferous forested swamps community occurs in areas where there is calcium-rich groundwater seepage. This nutrient enrichment results in many rare calcium-loving plant species. The center of the Seepage Swamp here opens up into a large, high-quality Calcareous Basin Fen. Calcareous Basin Fens are sedge-shrub peatlands occurring in well-defined basins that have calcareous water inputs. This wetland complex is a hot spot for plant and animal species diversity.

Plants

This Core Habitat is an important area of rare plant diversity. It contains several species adapted to the rare wetland habitats here. One of only two known Massachusetts populations of the Endangered herb Pink Pyrola is found in this wetland. Swamp Birch, Labrador Bedstraw, and Small Dropseed are a few of many other interesting and uncommon plant species that inhabit this area.

Invertebrates

This Core Habitat includes Kampoosa Bog and Kampoosa Fen, which provide a relatively large area of unfragmented habitat for the Dion Skipper butterfly. More than half of this Core Habitat is protected as conservation land. Conservation of the remaining unprotected land within this Core Habitat is important to increase the amount of contiguous protected habitat and to help ensure the long-term viability of rare species inhabiting the area.



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BioMap: Core Habitat Summaries

Stockbridge

Vertebrates

This Core Habitat encompasses Kampoosa Fen and adjacent forested uplands in Stockbridge. Open shallow marsh habitat along Kampoosa Brook provides breeding habitat for the American Bittern, a rare marsh bird. Shallow pools and rivulets with abundant sphagnum moss provide habitat for Four-toed Salamanders. Over half of this area is already protected as conservation land.

Core Habitat BM798

This Core Habitat contains riparian and upland habitats along Konkapot Brook and its tributaries, and along a stretch of the Housatonic River in Stockbridge. This is a key site for the protection of Wood Turtles in western Massachusetts. The area also encompasses large calcareous wetland communities that are associated with several rare plant species. Only a small portion of this valuable Core Habitat is currently protected as conservation land.

Natural Communities

This Core Habitat contains an excellent complex of species-rich, nutrient-enriched wetlands. The Black Ash-Red Maple-Tamarack Calcareous Seepage Swamp is one of the largest in the state. Black Ash-Red Maple-Tamarack Calcareous Seepage Swamps are mixed deciduous-coniferous forested swamps occurring in areas where there is calcium-rich groundwater seepage. This nutrient enrichment results in many rare calcium-loving plant species. Also within this Core Habitat, a Calcareous Basin Fen occurs as a ring around Agawam Lake. Calcareous Basin Fens are sedge-shrub peatlands occurring in well-defined basins that have calcareous water inputs. Here the wetland complex is very species-rich and is associated with several state-listed rare plant species.

Plants

A large and vigorous population of Intermediate Spike-Sedge (Threatened) is growing along a pondshore in one part of this Core Habitat. Another area supports rare fen species such as Hemlock Parsley and Swamp Birch.

Vertebrates

Diverse and connected riparian habitats along the meandering Konkapot Brook and its tributaries provide significant habitat for Wood Turtles. Riparian habitats used by Wood Turtles include meandering streams and sand bars, wet meadows, shrub and wooded swamps, upland forests with openings, and old fields. The length and relatively roadless condition of this area suggest that it may be one of the best places in western Massachusetts in which to preserve a viable population of Wood Turtles through habitat protection. Stony Brook and other coldwater, high-gradient brooks flowing into Konkapot Brook off the western slopes of Beartown Mountain likely support significant populations of Spring Salamanders.



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BioMap: Core Habitat Summaries

Stockbridge

Core Habitat BM812

Natural Communities

This is a larger than average Forest Seep community occurring on the slopes above the Housatonic River. Forest Seeps are hardwood forests found on wet slopes, where groundwater seeps out of the earth. The overstory is similar to that of the surrounding forest, but many typical wetland ferns, shrubs, and other plants occur as well. Here the fragile community is susceptible to disturbances from the nearby train tracks, roads, and a river access area. This seep is moderately buffered within a 500-acre roadless area.

Core Habitat BM813

This Core Habitat encompasses the summit and surrounds of Monument Mountain. Habitats here support a variety of rare plants, including vines of the Purple Clematis, as well as rare reptiles. Of note are the communities and habitats along the mountains slopes, including an extensive Circumneutral Talus Forest.

Natural Communities

This summit of Monument Mountain is composed of a small and heavily visited Ridgetop Pitch Pine-Scrub Oak community. The Ridgetop Pitch Pine-Scrub Oak community occurs on acidic bedrock along mountain ridges, often in a mosaic with Acidic Rocky Summit communities. This fire dependant community is tolerant of extremely severe growing conditions. Below this ridgetop community is an extensive Circumneutral Talus Forest. Calcareous Talus Forest communities develop on boulder strewn slopes below certain cliffs, with scattered trees, shrubs, vines, and ferns. There is often a gradient of vegetation density as the slope changes, with more trees on the lower slope. The talus slope here has a wide range of habitats, from open, treeless areas to wooded areas. Both of these communities are well-buffered within a 2300-acre roadless area of natural vegetation.

Plants

Inhabiting large boulders and talus slopes of the Monument Mountain area are viable populations of the rare vines Purple Clematis and Climbing Fumitory. Rich mesic forest portions of this Core Habitat support forest understory rare plants such as the Long-Styled Sanicle.

Vertebrates

This Core Habitat encompasses nearly 3 square miles of roadless upland habitats for a state-protected rare species of reptile. Principal habitats are dry mixed forest, rock outcrops, and talus slopes. Approximately one-third of the area within this Core Habitat is currently protected as conservation land.



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Living Waters: Species and Habitats

Stockbridge

Core Habitat LW125

Exemplary Habitats

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Lake/Pond Habitat		-----

Fishes

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Longnose Sucker	<i>Catostomus catostomus</i>	Special Concern

Core Habitat LW253

Plants

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Comb Water-Milfoil	<i>Myriophyllum verticillatum</i>	Endangered
Hill's Pondweed	<i>Potamogeton hillii</i>	Special Concern
Lesser Bladderwort	<i>Utricularia minor</i>	Watch Listed

Core Habitat LW291

Plants

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Hill's Pondweed	<i>Potamogeton hillii</i>	Special Concern
Water Star-grass	<i>Heteranthera dubia</i>	Watch Listed

Invertebrates

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Boreal Turret Snail	<i>Valvata sincera</i>	Endangered
Pilsbry's Spire Snail	<i>Pyrgulopsis lustrica</i>	Endangered

Fishes

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Status</u>
Bridle Shiner	<i>Notropis bifrenatus</i>	Special Concern



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Living Waters: Core Habitat Summaries

Stockbridge

Core Habitat LW125

This section of the Housatonic River and Mohawk Brook supports the Longnose Sucker, a fish Species of Special Concern. This species is restricted to the western watersheds of Massachusetts, where it is found in cold, clean, oxygen-rich streams with gravel bottoms. The Longnose Sucker sometimes migrates many miles to reach its spawning grounds. The eggs are released over the gravel bottom, making them susceptible to excess sedimentation, flow alterations, and increases in water temperature. These habitat degradations can be particularly detrimental to the reproductive success of this slow-growing fish that does not reach maturity until 5 to 7 years of age. Protecting the riparian areas adjacent to this Core Habitat will help maintain the cool, clean freshwater habitat of the Longnose Sucker.

At the top of the Core Habitat, Mohawk Lake is an undammed pond with higher alkalinity waters, which naturally occur in the western regions of Massachusetts underlain by limestone and marble bedrock. These types of ponds support uncommon plant and invertebrate species not found in other parts of the state. Mohawk Lake has relatively little development in its riparian areas and surrounding watershed.

Core Habitat LW253

Three rare plant species, including the globally rare Hill's Pondweed, are found in submerged areas of this wetland. Native freshwater plants like Hill's Pondweed are an important component of aquatic ecosystems, providing habitat and nutrition for fishes and invertebrates, and adding oxygen to the water through photosynthesis.

Core Habitat LW291

Stockbridge Bowl and its associated inflows sit atop calcareous bedrock, creating high pH waters that are home to several rare aquatic species. Two uncommon plant species that thrive in carbonate-rich waters are found here, the globally rare Hill's Pondweed and the Water Star-Grass. This Core Habitat is also an extremely important site for two critically imperiled snail species. It is the only known site in Massachusetts for the Endangered Boreal Turret Snail and one of two known sites for the Pilsbry's Spire Snail. Finally, this site supports a population of Bridle Shiner, a fish Species of Special Concern that has a small range from southern New England to South Carolina, and has been declining or extirpated in much of the region. To protect these and other species dependent on this uncommon aquatic habitat in Massachusetts, Stockbridge Bowl is in need of focused conservation attention.



Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
North Drive, Westborough, MA 01581
Tel: (508) 792-7270, Ext. 200 Fax: (508) 792-7821
<http://www.nhesp.org>

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